Official opening of transitional homes for homeless aboriginal people

WINDSOR, ONTARIO, March 9, 2007— Representatives from the Government of Canada and the City of Windsor today joined guests, tenants and community supporters to celebrate the official opening of Biimskiinodin, a new addition to Can-Am Urban Native Homes. The facility will assist families in moving from homelessness to permanent housing through two transitional and affordable units and support services.

This $337,444 project received $295,844 from the Government of Canada's Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI). In addition, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) contributed $40,758 under the Shelter Enhancement Program. The City of Windsor also provided $18,000 for rent subsidies from Ontario's Strong Communities Rent Supplement Program.

Attending today's ceremony were Jeff Watson, Member of Parliament for Essex, on behalf of the Honourable Monte Solberg, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development; Councillor Caroline Postma, Ward 2, City of Windsor; and Margaret Messenger, Executive Director, Can-Am Urban Native Homes.

"Canada's New Governm ent is delivering on its commitment to help those who are homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless," said Jeff Watson. "The Biimskinodin project will help ensure that vulnerable Aboriginal families in Windsor can access the housing and services they need."

"Rent supplements are an important tool that municipalities can use to address homelessness and support the creation of new affordable housing," said Dwight Duncan, Minister of Energy and MPP for Windsor - St. Clair on behalf of John Gerretsen, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. "The McGuinty government is proud to work with the City of Windsor to provide housing opportunities for people who are struggling with homelessness."

"Affordable housing is part of the foundation of a caring community," said Windsor's Mayor Eddie Francis. "We are pleased to participate in the Biimskiinodin project, supporting families as they move into their new homes."

"We are extremely delighted to be able to offer a home to homeless Aboriginal families. And in addition to this, give them an opportunity to establish a permanent stable household to break the cycle of homelessness. The support we have received from the Federal, Provincial and Municipal Governments has allowed us to secure and renovate a home as well as provide support services to participants in the Biimskiinodin Home," said Eric Hill, Transitional Housing Coordinator.

- 30 -

This news release is available in alternative formats upon request.

For more information:

Homelessness Partnering Strategy: www.homelessness.gc.ca

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation: www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing: www.mah.gov.on.ca

City of Windsor: www.citywindsor.ca

Can-Am Urban Native Homes: www.caunh.ca

For more information (media only):

Pema Lhalungpa Press Secretary Office of Minister Solberg 819-994-2482	Beth Bailey Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation 416-218-3355
Catherine Kaye Service Canada - Ontario Region 416-954-7302	Patricia Dolan Lewis Marketing and Communications Officer City of Windsor 519-253-2300 Ext.6877
Media Relations Office Human Resources and Social Development Canada 819-994-5559	Margaret Messenger Executive Director Can-Am Urban Native Homes 519 977-7782

backgrounder

National Homelessness Initiative

Canada's New Government recently announced that the National Homelessness Initiative, scheduled to end in March 2007, will be replaced by an improved strategy, the Homelessness Partnering Strategy, on April 1, 2007. The program will ensure partnerships with community organizations, the private and voluntary sectors, and other levels of government to develop local solutions to homelessness.

Homelessness Partnering Strategy

The new Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) will provide $269.6 million over two years to help communities across Canada combat homelessness more effectively.

The HPS focuses on a housing-first approach to homelessness because the federal government recognizes that housing stability is essential to self-sufficiency and full participation in Canadian society. With its clear goals of improved partnerships, enhanced sustainability and tangible results, the new Strategy will provide concrete, meaningful and lasting results for Canadians in need.

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC)

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) has been Canada's national housing agency for over 60 years and is committed to helping Canadians access a wide choice of quality, affordable

homes, while making vibrant, healthy communities and cities a reality across the country.

CMHC offers a wide array of renovation programs for low-income households.Throughthe Shelter Enhancement Program, CMHCoffers financial assistance for the repair, rehabilitation and improvement of existing shelters for victims of family violence, as well as the acquisition or construction of new shelters and second stage housing where needed.

Can-Am Urban Native Homes

Can-Am Urban Native Homes was established in 1988, through a Community Development Program, after a group of volunteers recognized an urgent need to assist the Aboriginal Community in need of transitional and affordable housing. Can-Am Urban Native Homes includes 81 single family homes, the Nash Kanonhsa Home and the Biimskiinodin Transitional House.

With a wide array of support services from their community partners, Can-Am Urban Native Homes also seeks to assist families in maintaining a home. Once placed at the Transitional Home, families may stay at the residence for approximately six months until permanent accommodation is secured.

- 30 -

All times are reflected in Atlantic time
Date Modified: 2007-03-09